

**Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
1998 Biennial Regulatory Review,)	
Streamlined Contributor Reporting)	
Requirements Associated with)	
Administration of Telecommunications)	CC Docket No. 98-171
Relay Services, North American)	
Numbering Plan, Local Number)	
Portability, and Universal Service)	
Support Mechanisms)	

REPLY COMMENTS

The National Exchange Carrier Association, Inc. (NECA) submits this reply to comments filed in response to the Bureau's *Public Notices* in the above-captioned proceeding.¹

Commenting parties generally support the Joint Submission's² proposal to employ a central data collection agent (DCA) to be responsible for the unified data collection for

¹ Common Carrier Bureau Seeks Comment on Joint Submission of Program Administrators Regarding Consolidated Data Collection Procedures and Cost Allocation Methodology, CC Docket No. 98-171, *Public Notice*, DA 99- 2334 (rel. Oct. 27, 1999) (*Public Notice*). In a subsequent Public Notice, the Bureau requested comments on a letter filed by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), in which USAC seeks to be designated as the entity responsible for the data collection for these programs. Common Carrier Bureau Seeks Comment on Joint Submission of Program Administrators Regarding Consolidated Data Collection Procedures and Cost Allocation Methodology, CC Docket No. 98-171, *Public Notice*, DA 99-2545 (rel. Nov. 16, 1999) (*Supplemental Notice*) (together referred to as *Public Notices*).

² Joint Submission of Program Administrators Regarding Consolidated Data Collection Procedures and Cost Allocation Methodology, 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review, Streamlined Contributor Reporting Requirements Associated with Administration of

all four programs.³ The Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA) states that a “central DCA is an efficient and cost-effective way to collect, validate, and process contributors’ data from these four programs.”⁴ CTIA further states that a central DCA will relieve the program administrators of administrative burdens, resulting in lower costs to the industry.⁵ While MCI WorldCom, Inc., (MCI WorldCom) supports one DCA, it recommends that the Commission allocate 62.5 percent of the data collection costs to USAC, and 12.5 percent to each of the remaining program administrators, rather than the cost allocation mechanism proposed by the four program administrators.⁶

NECA believes that both CTIA and MCI-WorldCom have come to the same conclusion that the program administrators reached regarding the efficiencies to be gained by employing a single DCA.⁷ Having a single entity perform the functions that

Telecommunications Relay Services, North American Numbering Plan, Local Number Portability, and Universal Service Support Mechanisms, CC Docket No. 98-171 (Oct. 12, 1999)(Joint Submission). Lockheed Martin-IMS (the local number portability administrator), the North American Numbering Plan Billing and Collection Agent (NBANC), the National Exchange Carrier Association, Inc. (NECA)(the Telecommunications Relay Services Fund administrator), and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)(the federal Universal Service Fund administrator), are hereinafter referred to as the “program administrators.”

³ The four programs are Local Number Portability (LNP), North American Numbering Plan Billing and Collection (NANP), Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS), and Universal Service Support Mechanisms (USSM) (hereinafter referred to as “programs”).

⁴ CTIA comments at 2.

⁵ See *id.* at 3.

⁶ See MCI WorldCom comments at 2.

⁷ Bell-Atlantic requests that “before allowing the fund administrators to designate a DCA, the Commission should require them to perform a cost benefit analysis of this proposal compared to the alternatives.” See Bell Atlantic comments at 2.

were previously done independently by four entities is a much more cost effective and efficient approach.

NECA also believes that the cost allocation mechanism proposed by the program administrators more closely approximates the benefits derived from the semi-annual data collection process, than the method suggested by MCI-WorldCom.⁸ While MCI-WorldCom is correct in its recognition that only USAC utilizes the revenue information from the September data collection, the other program administrators will derive benefit of updated customer name and address information as well. Given the numerous mergers and acquisitions that occur within the industry, this information will prove invaluable for the LNP, NBANC, and interstate TRS administrators in performing their billing and collection functions.

Three parties, MCI-WorldCom, CTIA and NECA comment on the selection of a DCA. MCI WorldCom recommends that the Commission designate a program administrator other than USAC to serve as interim DCA, pending issuance of a competitive request for proposals (RFP) by one of the administrators.⁹ CTIA states that the Commission should implement and administer a competitive bidding process open to all program administrators.¹⁰

As it stated in its comments, NECA believes the Commission should direct the four program administrators to develop satisfactory procedures among themselves for

⁸ See MCI WorldCom comments at 2.

⁹ See MCI WorldCom comments at 4.

¹⁰ See CTIA comments at 4.

selection and ongoing centralized supervision of a single DCA.¹¹ Allowing all program administrators to be directly responsible for the selection of the DCA will assure continuity of data collection procedures, and permit each program administrator to maintain supervisory responsibility for data collection procedures affecting their programs. Additionally, the program administrators' management of this process will reduce burdens on the Commission associated with management of a bidding process. The first streamlined revenue reporting submission is due April 1, 2000.¹² Identification of the DCA for that data collection needs to take place well prior to that date, however. At a minimum, sufficient lead-time is required to modify FCC Form 499A to reflect the location and contact phone number of the DCA and to obtain Office of Management and Budget approval, as well as providing approximately 30 days' time between distribution of the form to the industry and the due date for submission. If the Commission determines that a competitive bidding process is the appropriate course of action, it should not, as MCI-WorldCom suggests,¹³ instruct an interim administrator to develop a RFP and administer the bidding process. To do so, would effectively eliminate that entity from consideration for the ongoing DCA function.

NECA is able and willing to perform the DCA functions pending selection of the DCA by the program administrators. NECA has successfully administered data collection activities for TRS since 1993 and also for USAC and NBANC, under contract,

¹¹ See NECA comments at 5.

¹² See 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review streamlined Contributor Reporting Requirements Associated with administration of Telecommunications Relay Services, North American Numbering Plan, Local Number Portability, and Universal Service Support Mechanisms, CC Docket No. 98-171, *Report and Order*, FCC 99-175 (July 14, 1999).

¹³ See MCI WorldCom comments at 4.

since the inception of their respective programs in 1998,¹⁴ and is therefore well positioned to perform the DCA functions pending resolution of this proceeding.¹⁵

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¹⁴ Additionally, NECA provided the LNP administrator with its initial contributor contact information so that it could begin its billing and collection process earlier this year.

¹⁵ With respect to concerns expressed by Bell Atlantic, *see* Bell Atlantic comments at 2, regarding data security, NECA has an unblemished record in protecting confidential and proprietary data to which it has access and that is owned by other parties. In the more than 16-year history of NECA there has never been a compromise of security measures employed by NECA for protection of proprietary information.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copy of the Reply Comments was served this 9th day of December 1999, by electronic delivery or first class mail, to the persons listed below.

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